

FEBRUARY 2006

CAMP

# Bonneville news & information

## Closed Army base offers challenges and opportunities

From 1909 until 1995 Camp Bonneville in southeastern Clark County operated as a U.S. Army training base, including firearm and artillery firing ranges. Since the base closed in 1995, the focus has turned to how the 3,800-acre site in the Cascade foothills might be used in the future by the people of Clark County.

Now, after more than a decade of negotiation, debate, and unexpected delays, the long-term vision of creating a regional park and natural area at the site is beginning to take shape. Making this happen, however, will continue to be a lengthy and complex process that will take several years to put in place.

This newsletter provides background information on the expected ownership transfer of the acreage from the Army to Clark County, the plan to clean up the site for safe public use, and the key role of county residents in implementing the future reuse of the area.

## *Lots of work to do*

The agreement is not complete yet, but by spring or early summer Clark County expects the U.S. Army to transfer the deed for Camp Bonneville from Army ownership to county ownership. Once the deed is in hand, the county can then move ahead with implementing a plan to clean up hazardous wastes and searching for any unexploded shells accumulated at the site during 86 years of military use.

Several key steps toward creating a new Camp Bonneville are expected to occur this spring. These include:

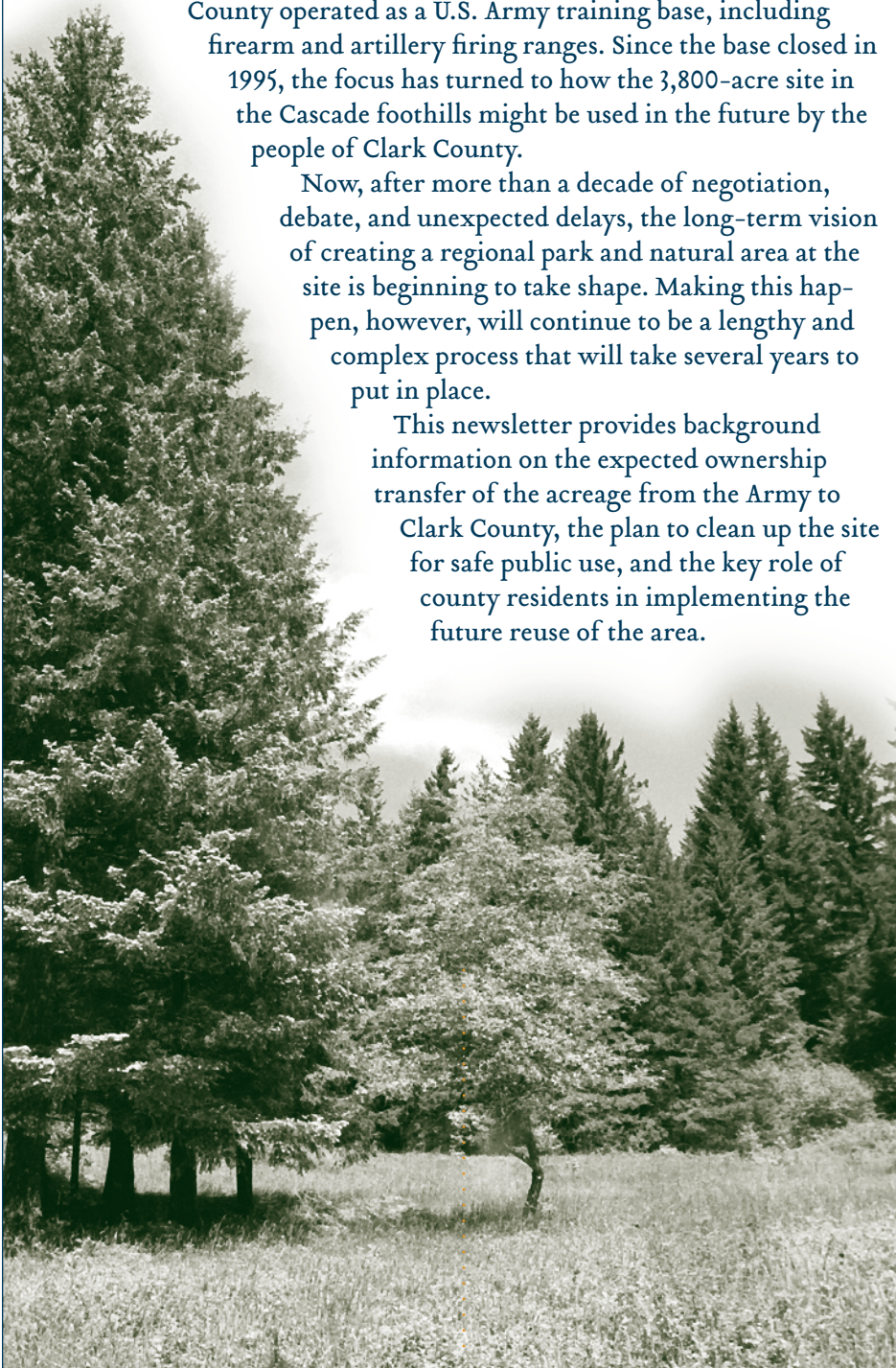
### ■ **State-approved cleanup plan**

– The state Department of Ecology (DOE) has lead planning and enforcement authority for hazardous cleanup work on military facilities within Washington. The department will produce a publicly-reviewed Cleanup Action Plan that serves as a blueprint for how the cleanup work should proceed. In addition, this state agency will ensure regulatory compliance with a court order that establishes cleanup obligations. Cleanup requirements and legal requirements for conducting those actions will be outlined in a publicly-reviewed Pre-Purchase Consent Decree (PPCD) which will be signed by the Department of Ecology and Clark County and filed in court.

### ■ **Agreement on site cleanup**

– This Environmental Services Cooperative Agreement (ESCA) commits the U.S. government to paying

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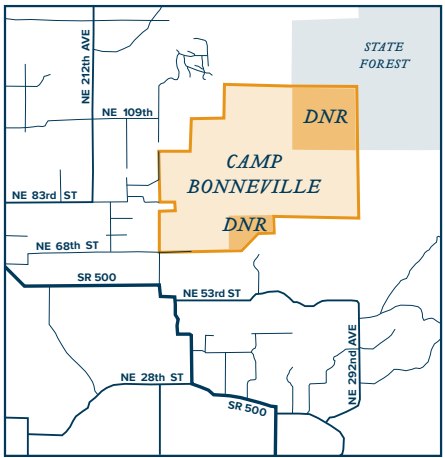


for cleanup of hazardous wastes and unexploded ordnance (UXO) at Camp Bonneville as identified in the Department of Ecology action plan. It also commits the county to make sure proper cleanup occurs.

■ **Camp Bonneville deed transfer** – Signing of the ESCA will be preceded by the Army issuing a FOSET, or Finding of Suitability for Early Transfer. The document defines the current condition of the property along with the recommended clean-up remedies and any rights and responsibilities of ownership. This is a no-cost deed transfer. The county is not paying the Army to acquire the site.

■ **Cleanup management** – The county will not manage the site cleanup directly. Instead, the work will be contracted to a consortium of companies skilled in conducting this highly specialized cleanup work. The Bonneville Conservation and Restoration Team (BCRT), led by the Trust for Public Lands (TPL), will manage the cleanup process and hold the deed to the property until the site meets required cleanup and related safety standards. Upon formal approval of the cleanup work, BCRT will transfer ownership back to the county. Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Department will then lead the park development process. Site cleanup is estimated to require four to five years, with park development taking several more years after that.

■ **Public participation** – Several of the items above will include public review and comment periods, including the DOE Pre-Purchase Consent Decree. Additionally, the existing citizens advisory board managed by the U.S. Army may disband once the Camp Bonneville deed transfers to the county. The county



will continue the commitment to public participation by forming a new body to represent broad community interests as cleanup work progresses and the park development process moves forward. The county will also issue periodic newsletters and Web site updates tracking clean-up activities.

## Questions and answers

**Q Who pays for the cost of cleanup?**

**A:** The U.S. Army will agree to pay all costs to carry out the cleanup approved by the state Department of Ecology. Federal funds will come to the county as cleanup moves ahead; then the county will pay that money to the contractor doing the work. Currently, the total estimated cost for cleanup is about \$25 million spent over the next four to five years.

**Q Who pays if the cleanup turns out to cost more than the amount the Army agrees to pay.**

**A:** The first requirement for all parties is to complete the cleanup to standards set by the Department of Ecology, so there is no dollar limit. If cleanup costs more than estimated, then the Army is legally obligated to provide funding, to clean up the site themselves, or to take the property back. Insurance coverage paid for by the Army will provide additional funds for cleanup if actual costs exceed the original estimate. The result is that county taxpayers will not be faced with the bill for cleanup.



**Q Why does the county want to take possession of a site that is contaminated with hazardous waste and unexploded shells?**

**A:** This “early transfer” of the deed from the Army provides a much quicker process to complete the cleanup and make the site available sooner for community uses.

**Q How will the community use this site once cleanup is complete?**

**A:** The county has a plan in place based on citizen input that designates various areas of the site for different uses. In general, one-third of the site will be established as a regional park, with the remaining two-thirds devoted to open space, primarily for wildlife and habitat conservation. These designated uses and the geographic location of these uses within the area serve as the basic guides for what level of cleanup occurs in specific locations.

**Q Can the county use this property for something other than a regional park?**

**A:** As part of the transfer, deed restrictions will be placed on the property to limit future uses.

## COMMUNITY USES for Camp Bonneville

- Regional park
- Law enforcement training center
- Retreat center/outdoor school
- Native American cultural center
- Clark College environmental education
- Trails and nature area
- FBI firing range
- Possible law enforcement and public firing ranges
- Timber resource management area
- Large wildlife habitat area

**Q After the cleanup, will the site be safe enough for people to use as a park?**

**A:** The state-approved cleanup action plan will make human health and safety the highest priorities in those areas where the reuse plan identifies future uses such as camping, outdoor schools, and trails. Areas of this large property where there are no plans for human activity, but yet pose potential risk, will be fenced and posted with signs to ensure that

people do not enter. The central artillery impact area will be cleared of known munitions. Because of the previous use as a target site, however, this area still will be fenced and posted to exclude entry.

**Q How will the county pay to design, build, and maintain this large park?**

**A:** The county anticipates that income from selective timber harvest within certain areas of the site will fund a portion of future park development costs and the ongoing operational costs. The final funding plan depends on several variables but will include grants and user fees. The goal is to develop the park as a self-sustaining enterprise.

## More information about the cleanup process

Once the U.S. Army transfers the Camp Bonneville deed to Clark County, the county will in turn transfer the deed to the Bonneville Conservation and Restoration Team (BCRT) to manage and physically conduct necessary cleanup required by the Washington State Department of Ecology.

This consortium of environmental and munitions cleanup experts will be led by the Trust for Public Lands (TPL). The TPL is a national nonprofit organization specializing in real estate transactions involving land conservation, and also cleanup of contaminated sites. TPL helps structure, negotiate, and complete land transactions that create parks, playgrounds, and protected natural areas.

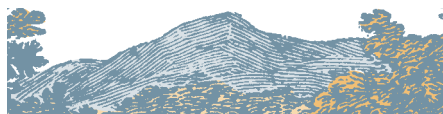
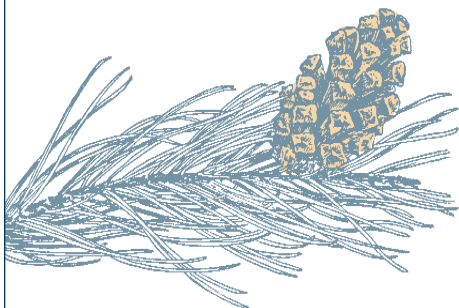
Once cleanup work has met state requirements, TPL will transfer the Camp Bonneville deed back to the county for parks development. The nonprofit organization has also committed to integrating future parks needs into the cleanup process where possible. For example, this could include locating cleanup access roads in areas where they can later be used for transportation routes within the park.





## If you want to be involved

Please contact Brian Vincent at (360) 397-6118 ext. 1626 or e-mail at [brian.vincent@clark.wa.gov](mailto:brian.vincent@clark.wa.gov) if you would like to be considered for membership on the county's public interest group for Camp Bonneville cleanup and park development. The Board of Clark County Commissioners will establish this advisory body upon final deed transfer.



### *For your information*

If you have questions, comments, or concerns about this project, please contact Brian Vincent, Operations Manager, Clark County Public Works, (360) 397-6118 ext. 1626 or e-mail at [brian.vincent@clark.wa.gov](mailto:brian.vincent@clark.wa.gov). You may also visit the Camp Bonneville Web site at [www.clark.wa.gov/public-works/campbonn/index.html](http://www.clark.wa.gov/public-works/campbonn/index.html).

This newsletter is available electronically and in hard copy. To add or delete a name from the newsletter mailing list, to be informed about future community meetings, or to request a speaker on Camp Bonneville issues for your group or organization, please contact Brian Vincent.



# News about Camp Bonneville

FEBRUARY 2006

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CLARK COUNTY  
WASHINGTON



Proud past, promising future

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